

## INSTRUCTIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COACHING

### Vision

Bellingham School District instructional staff is a community of learners (administrators, teachers and other staff engaged in the instruction of students) promoting, supporting and enhancing their individual and collective professional growth improvement. The Bellingham School District coaching model will focus on individual professional development in order to refine understandings about effective instruction. Coaching will provide teachers with in-depth and intensive opportunities to reflect and construct knowledge about instruction that result in increased student performance.

### Values

Coaching will serve to ensure that all students are in the daily presence of adults who are committed to their own life-long learning. Coaching also supports the District that is continuously renewing and learning. The values that are the basis of the coaching model are aligned with the research and principles outlined by the National Staff Development Council. The Bellingham coaching model will incorporate the following components/qualities:

- **Coherent**  
Align individual professional development priorities with district and site priorities that are reflected in strategic improvement plans.
- **Comprehensive**  
Provide organized, continuous, individual learning opportunities to meet district and site goals as well as curriculum and state standards.
- **Developmental**  
Include inquiry and reflection in order to meet the individual needs of adult education and career development.
- **Differentiated**  
Reflect and respect different ways individuals learn and change in order to instruct using the best research and practice available.
- **Diverse**  
Provide a range of options to support individual's goals and priorities.
- **Responsive and collaborative**  
Adapt to individuals changing needs and priorities, new information, and evaluation data.
- **Results oriented**  
Emphasize improved performance on the part of students, staff and the organization.
- **Systemic**  
Achieve change throughout the system by coordinating change with individualized learning.

### Description of Coaching

Coaching is "working alongside" colleagues to support their learning. This means supporting/coaching the teacher who is interacting with students and engaging in active learning and reflection. In order to construct knowledge about instructional practices that improve student learning, coaches provide personalized support based on the goals and identified needs of the individuals. The coach will not be involved in the supervision or evaluation of any teachers.

*"On the whole, the school reform movement has ignored the obvious: What teachers know and can do makes the crucial difference in what children learn. Policies can improve schools only if the people in them are armed with the knowledge, skills, and supports they need."*

-From the report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future, 1996

## Components of Coaching

There are seven components of the Bellingham School District Coaching Model. These components are derived from the current, best research about effective coaching models.

Components	References/Resources
<p><b><u>1. Goal Setting</u></b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Teacher determines the goal and selects the activities that will result in the achievement of the goal. Teachers will complete a Learning Focus Plan that is shared with the coach. The teacher-developed plan structures the coaching visit and coaching conversation.</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Learning Focus Plan: Section I Teaching and Learning Cycle</p>	<p>Bellingham School District Professional Growth Option</p> <p><i>Cognitive Coaching</i> pg 146 Costa and Garmston</p> <p><i>Mentoring Matters: Practical Guide To Learning Focused Relationships</i> pg 114-115 Lipton and Wellman</p> <p><i>The Learning Network</i> Richard C. Owen Publishing</p>
<p><b><u>2. Alignment with Building and District Goals</u></b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Teachers assess student work to assist in the identification of their goal. Building and District strategic plan goals and target objectives also provide guidance in goal setting. A goal of coaching is to produce a positive change throughout the school and District.</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> District Curriculum, Core Understandings and Common Practices for Literacy Support Guide, State Standards and Frameworks, Building Strategic Plan</p>	<p><i>A New Vision For Staff Development.</i> Dennis Sparks and Stephanie Hirsh, pg. 5 &amp; 6</p>
<p><b><u>3. Implementation of Best Instructional Practices</u></b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Teachers intentionally plan for instruction based on assessment and evaluation of student learning. Coaching enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards.</p> <p><u>Tools:</u> District Curriculum Guides, Core Understandings and Common Practices for Literacy Support Guide</p>	<p><i>Building a New Structure For School Leadership</i>, Richard F. Elmore.</p> <p><i>Getting to Scale with Good Education Practice</i>, Richard F. Elmore.</p> <p><i>Schools That Work</i>, Richard Allington</p>
<p><b><u>4. Inquiry and Reflection To Guide Learning</u></b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Teacher continuous inquiry is essential for student learning to occur. Teachers use a planning document like the Learning Focus Plan to guide their own questions and reflection about</p>	<p><i>How People Learn: Bridging Research and Practice.</i> John Bransford editor, National Academy Press.</p> <p><i>The Reflective Principal</i> pg 159-164 Stewart, Prebble and Duncan</p>

<p>their instructional practices.</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Learning Focus Plan Section II</p>	
<p><b><u>5. Classroom Visits</u></b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Teachers and coaches share an experience that facilitates the direction of the learning conversation. Experiences range along a continuum from consulting, collaborating, and to coaching.</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Note taking form Shared Learning Experiences: Consulting, Collaborating, Coaching</p>	<p><b><i>Foundations in Mentoring</i></b> New Teacher Center at University of California, Santa Cruz (learning focused mentoring)</p> <p><b><i>Improving the Essence of Teaching</i></b> Education Update from ASCD</p> <p><b><i>Task and Trust Matrix</i></b> Vista Association</p>
<p><b><u>6. Learning Focused Conversations</u></b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Learning focused conversations may center on planning, problem solving, or reflection. The coach guides the teacher through a reflective conversation by assisting the teacher to describe the shared experience, then analyze the actions taken by the teachers, and identify a new challenge or a refinement to a teaching practice.</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Reflective Process Learning Conversation Templates and Questions Learning Focus Plan Section III</p>	<p>Board Policy 5340</p> <p><b><i>Mentoring Matters: Practical Guide To Learning Focused Relationships</i></b> pg 49-51. Lipton and Wellman</p> <p><b><i>Foundations in Mentoring</i></b> New Teacher Center at University of California, Santa Cruz</p> <p><b><i>Inside Learning Network Schools</i></b> Richard C. Owen Publishing</p> <p><b><i>Cognitive Coaching</i></b> pg 49-53; pg 28 Costa and Garmston</p>
<p><b><u>7. On-going and Job Embedded</u></b></p> <p><u>Description:</u> Each school will create a structure and schedule for support, based on teacher needs and the school's strategic plan. The structure will provide for intensive, on-going, in-depth support by a coach for all staff but not necessarily in the same way or for the same amount of time.</p> <p><u>Tool:</u> Schedule Template Sample Schedules</p>	<p><b><i>But What If...Supporting Leaders and Learners</i></b>, PHI DELTA KAPPAN</p> <p>Bellingham School District Board Policy 5340</p> <p><b><i>Changing School Culture Through Staff Development</i></b>, ASCD, Albert Shanker, pg. 91 – 93.</p>

## District Teacher Support Program

### I. District Learning Facilitators

The District Learning Facilitators will provide training for building coaches over a two-year period. The support will include monthly site visits, specific guidance for coaches and administrators, and staff professional development sessions. The Learning Facilitators may work with experienced coaches to facilitate continued learning, and also provide or identify additional resources for professional development.

## A. District Learning Facilitator Roles and Responsibilities

- Facilitate professional development of building coaches, small groups, leadership teams and staff learning meetings
- Provide support for site coaches and teams to build capacity for sustaining on going learning through a coaching process
- Consult with site administrator and/or coaches to collect evidence of progress toward strategic plan goals, develop plans and activities for staff training, and support facilitation by site coaches
- Work with District Professional Development Coordinator to plan and review site visits
- Attend district leadership training
- Contribute to the growth of colleagues' instructional expertise
- Assist in Mentor Academy and New Teacher Seminars
- Participate in a broad array of educational decisions at all levels of the education system
- Facilitate district committee work in areas of expertise
- Provide staff development on a district and building level

## B. Structure

- 2 – 3 teachers released from their classroom teaching responsibilities to develop coaches and leadership teams at the sites.
- Make a three year commitment
- Participate in individual training

*“Our society can no longer accept the hit-or-miss hiring, sink-or-swim induction, trial-and-error teaching, and take-it-or-leave-it professional development it has tolerated in the past. The time has come to put teachers and teaching at the top of the nation’s reform agenda.”*

From the report of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future, 1996



## II. Site Coach

The site coach will typically be a teacher at a site who assists schools in providing effective professional development. This will enable individuals, groups, and the school to improve instructional practices that increase student performance.

### A. Coach Roles and Responsibilities

- Facilitate planning and implementing the building’s activities described in the building’s Strategic Plan
- Support the professional growth of colleagues in the work of the Strategic Plan Target Objectives
- Guide learning conversations and exchange ideas in a non-evaluative manner
- Solicit and use data (student work samples, student achievement information and teacher assessments) to guide building staff development
- Integrate “best practices” research in staff development activities
- Plan and implement ongoing staff development
- Participate on a building leadership team
- Provide resources (expertise, time, materials)
- Build learning, collegial relationships with individual staff members
- Support teachers in identifying and refining instructional strategies that lead to short and long-term goals
- Provide feedback and consultation about classroom observations and demonstrations
- Observe and support student learning

## **B. The role of the Coach does not include:**

- Serving as the principal designee
- Evaluating teachers
- Disciplining students in an administrative capacity
- Taking primary responsibility for the collection and preparation of student data, developing or preparing the school budget
- Serving as a substitute teacher
- Taking primary responsibility for the instruction of a specifically assigned group of students
- Performing clerical duties outside the primary job performance criteria

## **C. Training**

Training for site coaches will be delivered by a District Learning Facilitator over a two-year period. The first year will focus on development of the coaches' knowledge about instruction and assessment. The support will include monthly site visits, observations, and learning conversations about the coach's classroom practice. The second year will deal with the development of skills and relationships for working along side colleagues in a coaching process.

## **D. Selection Process of the Site Coach**

Each site will identify coaches. Identifying the best people for the position of coach is vital to the success of job-embedded, on-site staff development. Interested staff should reflect upon the skills necessary to be a coach. Tools are provided to assist in the selection process (See Teacher Self Analysis Scale in Linda Lambert's *Building Leadership Capacity in Schools*). Staff is encouraged to let the principal know if they are interested. The selection process will include staff input, agreement, and communication with site council with the principal making the final appointments.

## **E. Pre-Requisite Criteria**

- Three years of teaching experience
- Two years as a mentor **or** one year as a mentor and one year as a CFG Facilitator

*“For a complex model of teaching, we estimate that about 25 teaching episodes during which the new strategy is used are necessary before all the conditions of transfer are achieved”:* (Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987)



## **III. Building Administrators**

Building Administrators are central to the success of a coaching model. Administrators support the development of coaches by participating in their learning when the District Learning Facilitator works in the building. The administrator is expected to schedule the day when the District Learning Facilitator is present so that they can observe, hold learning conversations, and facilitate staff meetings.

As supervisors of staff in the school, they approve professional goals and help shape the use of Individual Staff Development Funds. The administrator can support teachers in working with coaches by helping with goal development, scheduling of learning conversations opportunities, and identification of staff needs that drive successful coaching and whole staff learning meetings.

### **A. Building Administrators' Roles and Responsibilities**

- Identify possible pool of coaches and work with staff on the selection process
- Participate in the monthly training sessions with Coaches and the District Learning Facilitator
- Support the development of common practices across the school

- Collect evidence of student learning to support identified common practices
- Provide supervision and support to all teachers
- Schedule opportunities for coaching activities: observations, learning focused conversations, and staff learning meetings
- Support the development of a schedule that supports the coach in implementing the coaching process as well as carrying out other teaching responsibilities

## B. Support Structures for the Administrator in a Coaching Model

- Attend Leadership Seminars for principals on coaching process
- Provide input at level meetings to improve and refine coaching process
- Attend training opportunities on facilitation strategies to support adult learning and adult learning meetings



*“We must lift our leaders so they can challenge teachers to improve the teaching process, inspire a shared vision, enable others, model the way, and encourage the heart.”* From the Leadership Challenge by Barry Posner

## IV. The Teacher

The skillful teacher is one who considers him or herself to be a learner. In the coaching model, the teacher receives one-on-one support from the site coach. The purpose of their work will be to support the teacher in reflecting on their practices for instruction and assessment and its impact on student learning. Teachers set their own learning goals. These goals form the foundation of the learning conversation with support from the coach. The teacher engages in a learning conversation to plan, problem solve, and refine their understandings about teaching and learning.

### A. Teacher Roles and Responsibilities in a coaching model

- Be open to new learning
- Provide quality learning opportunities based on the school’s strategic plan, district curriculum, and the learning needs of the students
- Maintain an understanding of the developing trends in education
- Participate fully in learning conversations
- Set goals for learning conversations
- Maintain professional rapport with the coach that promotes high quality teaching and learning

*“A Learning organization is one where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspirations are set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”*

From The Fifth Discipline by Peter Senge



### B. Support Structure for Teacher Participation in the Coaching Process

- Schedule developed by Leadership Team/Principal to release classroom teacher to participate in a learning focused conversation
- Learning Focus Plans are readily available for classroom teachers to complete
- A flexible schedule allows for teachers to participate in coaching based on individual needs

## **COACHING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

### **I. YEAR ONE**

#### **A. Goals:**

- To develop understandings of the role of the coach
- To develop understandings of effective instructional practices that link to increased student performance and success
- To understand and participate on the building leadership team
- To develop the ability to reflect on one's practice

#### **B. Description:**

In year one, the coaches and site administrator will meet monthly with the District Facilitator. The monthly meetings will focus on the coaches' classroom practice through observations and dialogue. In addition, the District Facilitator will work with the site administrator on the use of data to plan for instruction in the coach's classroom. The coaches and administrator will develop and analyze monthly goals and plans that are reviewed with the District Facilitator. The building leadership team will facilitate learning meetings and analyze building agreements with staff.

#### **C. Content of Training**

- Reflection skills
- Collection of assessment data to guide instruction
- Knowledge about models, strategies, and instructional practices
- Leadership skills (interpersonal skills, communications skills, qualities of leadership, group facilitation)
- Process for action research
- Development of culture of adult inquiry and learning
- Exploration of a variety of systems for delivering one to one support for year two

*"It seems obvious to say, except we don't practice it...  
You can't have a learning society  
Without learning students and  
You can't have learning students,  
Without learning teachers."*

-From Change Forces, Michael Fullan,

### **II. YEAR TWO**

#### **A. Goals**

- To practice working alongside teachers for professional development (one on one and small group)
- To develop leadership skills
- To reflect and refine one's own practices

- To plan and implement building professional development which supports the building's strategic plan.

## **B. Description**

In year two, the coaches will actively participate in the professional development of individual teachers through observation and dialogue. The District Facilitator will observe and reflect with the coach monthly to guide and develop understandings about classroom practice and reflective dialogue. The District Facilitator will continue to support the site leadership team and administrator in data gathering and analysis, in order to plan for school improvement and professional development.

## **C. Content of Training**

- Facilitation of focused, reflective dialogue
- Leadership skills (communication, interpersonal, problem solving, decision making, group process)
- Development of agreements and use with strategic planning
- Collecting, analyzing and using data to support school-wide progress
- Maintenance and refinement of year one training

# **III. SUSTAINING COACHING DEVELOPMENT**

## **A. Goals**

- To focus on maintenance of coaching skills in working alongside teachers for professional development
- To support building efforts in school-wide professional development that is data driven
- To sustain continuous, personal learning at a deeper, further refined level.

## **B. Description**

In year three, the District Facilitator will provide continuing learning support for the coaches. At a minimum of four times a year, support will be provided by the District Facilitator and outside consultants to further learning and extend the understandings of the site coach and administrator.

## **C. Content of Training**

- To be determined by site data and identified needs of the site leadership team.
- Gradual release of responsibility
- Capacity building